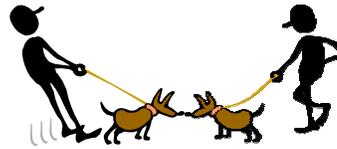


A DIALOGUE WITH RESISTANCE

7-Step Design



WHO Participants: 15 – 25 DEI attendees, mostly familiar with Dialogue Education and/or Jane Vella’s writings. Highly educated people who are committed to the principles of DE and who teach, facilitate and lead – often with people who have not been exposed to DE. Mostly from the U.S. and Canada with some from farther away. Large representation of people who work in education, healthcare, and non-profit/NGO human services.
Facilitator: Bert Troughton, social worker providing org consulting and training in animal protection; GLP certified teacher (Contact: bertt@aspca.org)

WHY Teachers, facilitators, managers and leaders face a variety of resistances in their day-to-day work. Taking the time to consider the source and purpose of the resistance – and to understand our reactions to it – can help us to work *with* resistance effectively rather than expending energy trying to avoid or counter it.

WHEN Friday, October 6, 2006 12:45 to 2 pm 75 minutes
After-lunch on day one of 3-day Institute – concurrent with two other sessions

WHERE The Reading Room, Noble Hall, Vermont College, Montpelier, VT

WHAT	WHAT FOR (achievement-based objectives)
Sources of resistance	Named examples of resistance in your work and categorized them into personal, interpersonal and systemic
The content & process of the workshop	Observed the ABO’s and developed one personal goal for the workshop
New lenses on resistance	Examined eight lenses on resistance and discussed new insights from this examination
Listening with respect to understand resistance	Selected a resistance to work with and described what it looks like in action Examined five reasons for the resistance to exist Constructed a new description of the resistance or your reaction to it Specified the ways this approach led to insight or understanding for you
Planning for resistance	Reviewed your goal for this workshop and identified a next step toward furthering your work

HOW (the learning tasks)

1) Who's Here & What Resistances Are You Thinking About?

We can think about resistance as generating from three sources:

- a) internal/personal – thoughts and feelings
- b) in the room/interpersonal – responses from the learners
- c) beyond the room/systemic – people and structures on the outside that have influence over the content, process and people in the room



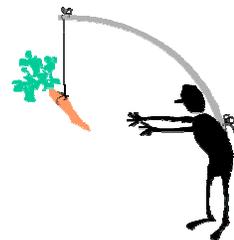
At your tables, briefly introduce yourselves and tell what resistances look like and sound like in your work.

As a group, make a sticky note for each resistance named. Categorize your group's sticky notes into the corresponding sources of resistance on the wall.

2) What do you want to achieve during this workshop?

Now that you've seen and heard about the Achievement Based Objectives for this workshop, develop one personal goal for your time here. Write it down and share it with a partner. (We will return to these goals near the end of the workshop.)

My goal in this workshop:



3) Thinking about Resistance



a) There are eight lenses on resistance posted around the room. Individually, take a quiet walk around the room stopping at each perspective to consider it.

b) At your table, discuss your questions, reactions, ideas and insights from your tour. We will hear some highlight "a-ha's" and questions in the large group.

4) Talking with Resistance



a) With a partner, you are going to enact a dialogue with a resistance of your choosing. To do this, one of you will be the voice of the resistance, while your partner responds respectfully with *thank you for coming, why are you here?* You answer for the resistance – attempting to feel and articulate the purpose of the resistance. This sequence will be repeated five times so that you can delve deeper into the reasons for the resistance. To begin: name the resistance for which you will be speaking.

For example:

I am the resistance of the boss who thinks learning tasks will take too much time for staff training – just tell the staff what they need to do.

Partner responds: *Thank you for coming, why are you here?*

Answer the question on behalf of the resistance: *I'm worried about people getting their work done on time.*

Partner responds: *Thank you, say more about why you're here.*

Answer for the resistance: *It doesn't look to me like people are taking our deadlines seriously. I hear all this laughing and see people playing with colored paper while...*

Repeat until you have answered "why" five times.

Take a moment or two of silence to collect your thoughts and perhaps jot down some notes. Take a breath to prepare for transition.

b) Trade places and begin again. This time your partner chooses the resistance for which s/he will speak and you will respond five times with, *thank you for coming, why are you here?* Remember to take a moment at the end to collect your thoughts.

c) Debrief at your tables:

What were the effects of thanking the resistance?

What did you learn about your resistances?

How was respect used in this process?

What can you do to show respect to the resistances you face in your work?



We will hear some of your thoughts and observations in the large group.

5) Planning for Resistance

Return to your goal for this workshop (page 2). How did you do? What is your next step?



When is the next time you will face resistance?

What is one thing you will think or do differently?

A Few Lenses for Thinking about Resistance

The more I understand something [that is new or frightening] through knowledge *and* experience, the more comfortable I feel.

Resistance has a purpose.

Is it helpful for me to tell you not to worry about the resistance you will face in your work? Why?

The more supportive, accepting and caring the social environment, the freer a person is to experiment with new behaviors, attitudes and ideas. (Lewin)

When has your resistance been a good thing?

Adults are decision makers. We want to be treated as subjects, not objects. (Vella)

When the wind blows hard, I lean into it because I do not want to be blown off balance. Yet I love to open the windows and let the breeze refresh the house.

In Aikido, to listen to the person pushing against me, I want to stand up and turn to see what she is looking at.